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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: MASS, GR
SUBJECT: GREEK DECISION ON NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT IMMINENT?

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1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. A GREEK DECISION ON A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT MAY BE FAST APPROACHING, AT LEAST JUDGING FROM STATEMENTS BY OFFICIAL QUARTERS TO THE PRESS AND FROM OTHER INDICATIONS. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD) ANNOUNCED JANUARY 25 THAT THE COMPETING AIRCRAFT COMPANIES HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO MAKE THEIR FINAL BIDS BY MID-FEBRUARY. ON THE SAME DAY THE PRIME MINISTER WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON THE AIRCRAFT BY KEY CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS AND TO HAVE REITERATED THE MOD REQUEST THAT FINAL BIDS BE SUBMITTED.

3. ALTERNATE MINISTER OF DEFENSE DROSSOYIANNIS, WHO IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE TWO OR THREE PRINCIPLE ADVISERS TO PAPANDREOU ON THE PURCHASE, TOLD CODEL ADDABBO JANUARY 10 THAT THE DECISION TO BUY 100 OR SO AIRCRAFT WOULD BE MADE "VERY SOON." THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE, MAJOR GENERAL MARINAKIS, TOLD THE HEAD OF JUSMAGG'S AIR FORCE SECTION JANUARY 25 THAT THE HAF EVALUATION OF THE COMPETING AIRCRAFT (MCDONNELL DOUGLAS F-18, GENERAL DYNAMICS F-16, MIRAGE 2000 AND THE TORNADO) WAS LONG SINCE COMPLETE, THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE HAF EVALUATION TEAM HAD BEEN REASSIGNED TO OTHER TASKS, AND THAT A DECISION WOULD BE MADE "SOONER OR LATER, AND I BELIEVE SOONER."

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

4. A GREEK ARMS MANUFACTURER REPRESENTATIVE IN ATHENS, ON TARGET IN HIS PREDICTIONS ON TIMING IN THE PAST, TOLD AN EMBOFF JANUARY 26 THAT THE DECISION WOULD BE MADE WITHIN ONE TO TWO MONTHS BY PAPANDREOU, DROSSOYIANNIS AND HAF CHIEF, GENERAL KOURIS. STEARNS
END OF MESSAGE

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State Dept. review completed

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